

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Developing a Conservation Plan for the Future

TNC/New Hampshire



Cherry Pond, S.O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, N.H.

The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is unique because it is the only watershed project in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was established in 1997 to protect populations of migratory fish and birds, threatened and endangered plants and animals, and other native species throughout the Connecticut River watershed. It is a formidable challenge to protect these resources within the 7.2 million acre watershed, located in four New England states, where more than two million people live and work.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages national wildlife refuges, works in partnership with States, conservation organizations, business and industry, and concerned citizens to cooperatively protect these resources. The Service has acquired land for the refuge at specific locations in the four watershed states - Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont - that are of the highest value to wildlife.

A Conservation Plan for the Future

The Service has begun developing a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for the refuge. The CCP will establish management goals and objectives for the refuge's wildlife management, habitat protection, and public use programs for the next 15 years.

The CCP process provides an opportunity for States, conservation and local organizations, communities, and concerned citizens to participate in the development of this far-reaching plan. As the first step in the planning process, refuge staff and Service planners will host open houses at locations throughout the watershed (see sidebar). Participants will have the opportunity at these meetings to learn about existing refuge programs, help the planning team identify key issues, share ideas and concerns, and make recommendations on how the refuge should be managed in the future.

Information from the open houses, and through other public involvement opportunities, will guide the planning team as it develops proposed management alternatives. These proposed alternatives will be included in a draft CCP, which the Service expects to release for public review in December 2007.

Public Open Houses

Tuesday, Oct. 17	Columbia, NH Town Hall, 7-9 pm
Wednesday, Oct. 18	Jefferson, NH Town Hall, 7-9 pm
Thursday, Oct. 19	Winchester, NH Town Hall, 7-9 pm
Tuesday, Oct. 24	Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center; Wethersfield, CT, 7-9 pm
Thursday, Oct. 26	East Hampton Library Community Room East Hampton, CT 7-9 pm
Wednesday, Nov. 1	USFWS Regional Office, Hadley, MA 7-9 pm
Thursday, Nov. 2	Grange/Senior Center Chesterfield, MA 7-9 pm
Wednesday, Nov. 8	Multi-purpose Room, Brighton Elementary School Island Pond, VT 7-9 pm
Thursday, Nov. 9	Montshire Museum, Norwich, VT 7-9 pm

For more specific information about the location of the open houses and for up to date information on the planning process, go to the refuge's planning web page at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Conte/ccphome.html>

Planning Schedule

December 2006- November 2007	Develop draft CCP/ EIS
December 2007	Release public draft CCP/EIS
January/February 2008	Hold public comment meetings on CCP/EIS
September 2008	Release Final CCP

Purposes for which the refuge was established

(1) to conserve, protect, and enhance the Connecticut River valley populations of Atlantic Salmon, American shad, river herring, shortnosed sturgeon, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, black ducks, and other native species of plants, fish and wildlife;

(2) to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural diversity and abundance of plant, fish and wildlife species and the ecosystems upon which these species depend within the refuge;

(3) to protect species listed as endangered or threatened, or identified as candidates for listing, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(4) to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of wetlands and other waters within the refuge;

(5) to fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States relating to fish and wildlife and wetlands; and

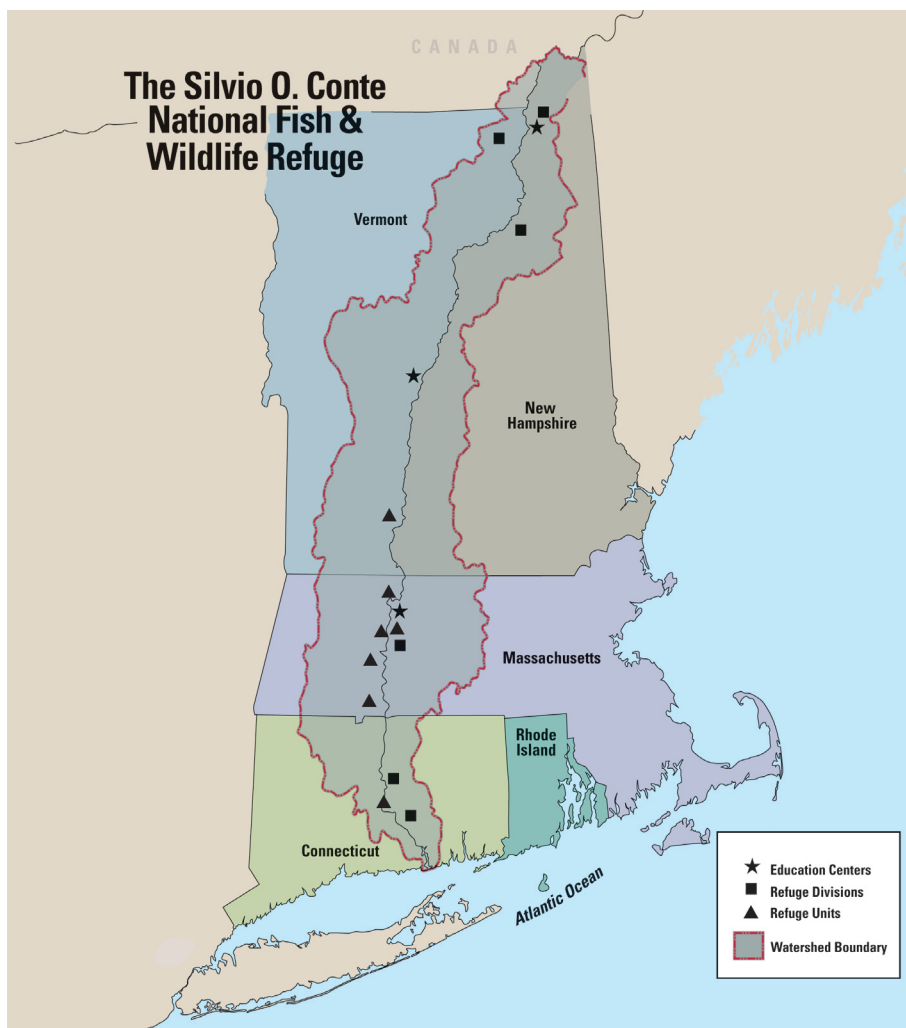
(6) to provide opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, and fish and wildlife oriented recreation and access to the extent compatible with the other purposes stated in this section.

Refuge Profile

Established:	1997
Current staff:	11.8
FY 2005 budget:	
Ops./maintenance*	\$1,178,596
Other**	\$1,670,376
Established:	1997
Current total acres:	32,179
Connecticut	31
Massachusetts	238
New Hampshire	5,336
Vermont	26,534
2005 visitation:	200,706
2005 volunteer hours:	4,602

*Includes annual maintenance, utilities, contracts

**Includes deferred maintenance, construction, equipment, and biological projects



Refuge Lands and Education Centers

Connecticut	
Deadman's Swamp Unit	Middlesex County
Massachusetts	
Fort River Division	Hampshire County
Great Falls Discovery Center	Turners Falls
Refuge Headquarters	Turners Falls
New Hampshire	
Great North Woods Interpretative Center	Coos County
Pondicherry Division	Coos County
Vermont	
Nulhegan Basin Division	Essex County
Montshire Museum	Windsor County

For more information:

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**As of November 30, 2006, refuge headquarters will be relocated from Turners Falls, MA to E. Plumtree Road in Sunderland, MA. The new phone number is not available yet.

Federal Relay Service for the deaf or hard-of-hearing: 1 800/877 8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>
September 2006

